

EU-Kazakhstan: first Cooperation Council since signature of the enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement

The Cooperation Council between the European Union (EU) and Kazakhstan held its fifteenth meeting on Tuesday, 4 October 2016 in Brussels. The meeting was chaired by **Mr Miroslav Lajčák**, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovakia. The delegation of Kazakhstan was led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan **Mr Erlan A. Idrissov**. Jean-Christophe Belliard, Deputy Secretary General of the European External Action Service was also present.

The Cooperation Council welcomed the **start of implementation of the enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement**, provisionally applied since 1 May 2015 in a number of areas, including political dialogue, trade and economic cooperation, rule of law and justice. The Cooperation Council confirmed the mutual interest in **consolidating the relations and cooperation**, in particular in **ensuring regional stability and development**.

The Cooperation Council also **discussed political, judiciary and economic reforms, the rule of law, trade and economic relations, and international issues**, topics that are of importance to both parties. The Cooperation Council addressed the issues of **good governance, human rights protection and civil society cooperation**. It also underlined the need to maintain the right balance between legitimate security measures necessary in fighting terrorism and individual rights and freedoms.

The Cooperation Council reiterated the importance of a **regional dialogue under the EU strategy for Central Asia**. Regional security aspects were also discussed in relation to the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, including border management, counter-terrorism and the fight against drug trafficking.

The EU welcomed Kazakhstan's active participation in the EU-Central Asia ministerial meeting and in the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan.